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CHILD STUDY

INDEX TO VOLUME XIII

October 1935 to May 1936

SUBJECTS

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Oct.--BROTHERS AND SISTERS

EDITORIAL	
Floyd Dell	1
VARIATIONS ON THE FAMILY THEME	
Ruth Wendell Washburn	3
SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE	
Josette Frank	5
SPECIAL CAPACITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS	
Simon H. Tulchin	9
"BROTHERS AND SISTERS HAVE I NONE"	
Anna W. M. Wolf and Ruth Brickner, M. D.	11

PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND THE ENJOYMENT OF LIFE	
Sidonie M. Gruenberg	69
MUSIC IN THE HOME	
Sigmund Spaeth	72
HOBBY RIDING--AT HOME AND SCHOOL	
Earl S. Goudey	75
CHILDREN AND THE "MOVIES"	
Helen G. Sternau	78
FAMILY GAMES	
Zilpha C. Franklin	80

Nov.--STEPS TOWARD MATURITY

EDITORIAL	
Ruth Brickner, M. D.	33
FOUNDATIONS OF MATURITY	
Mary Shirley	35
WIDENING HORIZONS	
Helen Steers Burgess	39
ADVENTURES TOWARD INDEPENDENCE	
George D. Stoddard	41
ADOLESCENCE--A LOOK BACKWARD AND AHEAD	
Harvey W. Zorbaugh	44
EDUCATION FOR REALITY	
Raymond Gram Swing	47
LOVE AND MARRIAGE	
Ernest R. Groves	49

<u>Jan.--THE CHILD'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH--CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD</u>	
EDITORIAL	
John L. Elliott	97
THE DILEMMA OF CHARACTER TRAINING	
Anna W. M. Wolf	99
CONSCIENCE AND EXPERIENCE	
Ives Hendrick, M. D.	102
CHARACTER IN ADOLESCENCE	
Thomas J. McCormack	105
"YOUNG REBELS"--AND THEIR PARENTS	
Zelda Popkin, Walter Ludwig	108

Feb.--THE CHILD'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH--RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Dec.--PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND AMUSEMENTS

EDITORIAL	
Hughes Mearns	67

EDITORIAL	
Harold Benjamin	129
PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN SEARCH OF "THE GOOD"	
Cecile Pilpel	131
THE BEGINNINGS OF RELIGION IN EARLY CHILD- HOOD	
Sophia Lyon Fahs	134

RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION IN THE HOME Herbert Schneider	137	<u>May</u> --CHILDHOOD IN LITERATURE--READINGS FROM FICTION AND BIOGRAPHY	
BACKGROUNDS OF ADOLESCENT RELIGION Lois Barclay Murphy	140	EDITORIAL	225
THE CHURCH AND THE CHILD Mary Alice Jones, B. Benedict Glazer, Algethon D. Black, and F. A. Walsh	144	BEGINNINGS OF GENIUS Louise Seaman Bechtel	227
<u>Mar.</u> --AUTHORITY--IN SEARCH OF A GOLDEN MEAN		FROM "EARLY ONE MORNING IN THE SPRING" Walter de la Mare. Macmillan Co. 1935	229
EDITORIAL Justine Wise Tulin	161	FROM "GOOD-BYE FOR THE PRESENT" Eleanor Acland. Macmillan Co. 1935	230
AUTHORITY AND THE MODERN PARENT Sidonie M. Gruenberg	163	FROM "JEREMY" Hugh Walpole. Doubleday-Doran Co. 1919	232
PARTNERS IN AUTHORITY Leonard Blumgart	165	FROM "THE LONGEST YEARS" Sigrid Undset. Alfred A. Knopf. 1935	234
THE PERSONAL EQUATION IN DISCIPLINE Erik Homburger	167	FROM "TREE TOAD--THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL BOY" Bob Davis. Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1935	235
SOCIAL DISCIPLINE AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD Ernest Osborne	171	FROM "IF THIS BE I" Margaret Deland. D. Appleton-Century Co. 1935	237
THE DILEMMAS OF ADOLESCENCE Wilfréd Richmond	174	FROM "SWANN'S WAY" Marcel Proust. The Modern Library. 1928	238
<u>Apr.</u> --FEAR--AND FEARS--IN CHILDHOOD		FROM "MOON CALF" Floyd Dell. Macaulay Co. 1920	240
EDITORIAL Arthur L. Swift	193	FROM "THE BENT TWIG" Dorothy Canfield. Henry Holt. 1916	242
THE NORMAL NEUROSES OF CHILDHOOD Lawrence S. Kubie, M.D.	195	FROM "INNOCENT SUMMER" Frances Frost. Farrar and Rinehart. 1936	243
BEING AFRAID Ruth Brickner, M. D. and Josette Frank	198	FROM "STUDS LONIGAN" James T. Farrell. Vanguard Press. 1932, 1934, 1935	245
WHAT SHALL WE TELL THE CHILDREN? Jean Schick Grossman	203	FROM "THE WAY OF ALL FLESH" Samuel Butler. E. P. Dutton. 1916	247
ADOLESCENT ANXIETIES Augusta Bronner	206		

ACLAND, Eleanor		FAHS, Sophia Lyon	
From "Good-Bye for the Present"	230	The Beginnings of Religion in Early Childhood	134
BECHTEL, Louise Seaman		FROST, Frances	
Beginnings of Genius	227	From "Innocent Summer"	243
BENJAMIN, Harold		GLAZER, B. Benedict	
Editorial	129	The Church and the Child	144
BLACK, Algernon		GOUDEY, Earl S.	
The Church and the Child	144	Hobby Riding--at Home and School	75
BLUMGART, Leonard		GROSSMAN, Jean Schick	
Partners in Authority	165	What Shall We Tell The Children?	203
BRICKNER, Ruth, M. D.		GROVES, Ernest R.	
"Brothers and Sisters Have I None"	11	Love and Marriage	49
Editorial	33		
Being Afraid	198	GRUENBERG, Sidonie M.	
		Parents, Children, and the Enjoyment of Life	69
BRONNER, Augusta		Authority and the Modern Parent	163
Adolescent Anxieties	206		
BURGESS, Helen S.		HENDRICK, Ives, M. D.	
Widening Horizons	39	Conscience and Experience	102
BUTLER, Samuel		HOMBURGER, Erik	
From "The Way of All Flesh"	247	The Personal Equation in Discipline	167
CANFIELD, Dorothy		JONES, Mary Alice	
From "The Bent Twig"	242	The Church and the Child	144
DAVIS, Bob		KUBIE, Lawrence S.	
From "Tree-Toad--The Autobiography of a Small Boy"	235	The Normal Neuroses of Childhood	195
DELAND, Margaret		LUDWIG, Walter	
From "If This Be I"	237	"Young Rebels"--and Their Parents	108
DELL, Floyd		MARE DE LA, Walter	
Editorial	1	From "Early One Morning in the Spring"	229
From "Moon-Calf"	240		
ELLIOT, John L.		MCCORMACK, Thomas J.	
Editorial	97	Character in Adolescence	105
FARRELL, James T.		MEARNS, Hughes	
From "Studs Lonigan"	245	Editorial	67
FRANK, Josette		MURPHY, Lois Barclay	
Share and Share Alike	5	Backgrounds of Adolescent Religion	140
Being Afraid	198		
FRANKLIN, Zilpha C.		OSBORNE, Ernest	
Family Games	80	Social Discipline and the Outside World	171

PIIPEL, Cecile		TULCHIN, Simon H.	
Parents and Children in Search		Special Capacities and Special Needs	9
of "The Good"	131		
POPKIN, Zelda		TULIN, Justine Wise	
"Young Rebels"--and Their Parents	108	Editorial	161
		UNDSET, Sigrid	
		From "The Longest Years"	234
PROUST, Marcel		WALPOLE, Hugh	
From "Swann's Way"	238	From "Jeremy"	232
RICHMOND, Winifred		WALSH, F. A.	
The Dilemmas of Adolescence	174	The Church and the Child	144
SCHNEIDER, Herbert		WASHBURN, Ruth Wendell	
Religious Celebration in the		Variations on the family Theme	3
Home	137		
SHIRLEY, Mary		WOLF, Anna W. M.	
Foundations of Maturity	35	"Brothers and Sisters Have I None"	11
		The Dilemma of Character Training	99
SPAETH, Sigmund		ZORBAUGH, Harvey W.	
Music in the Home	72	Adolescence--A Look Backward and	
STERNAU, Helen G.		Ahead	44
Children and the "Movies"	78		
STODDARD, George D.			
Adventure Toward Independence	41		
SWIFT, Arthur L.			
Editorial	193		
SWING, Raymond Gram			
Education for Reality	47		

BOOK REVIEWS

WILLINGLY TO SCHOOL, by the staff of the Fox Meadow School, Scarsdale, New York	20
PARENTS LOOK AT MODERN EDUCATION, by Winifred E. Bain	20
SEX EDUCATION--FACTS AND ATTITUDES Child Study Association	21
GROWTH: A STUDY OF JOHNNY AND JIMMY, by Myrtle McGraw	55
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT, by Susan Isaacs	55
WAYWARD YOUTH, by August Aichhorn	116
CRITERIA FOR A LIFE HISTORY, by John Dollard	117
PATTERNS OF CULTURE, by Ruth Benedict	117
A MODERN'S LITERATURE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, several books reviewed by Helen G. Sternau	152
PRINCIPLES OF ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY, by Edmund S. Conklin	180
THE ROAD TO ADOLESCENCE, by Joseph Garland	180
NURSERY EDUCATION--THEORY AND PRACTICE by William E. Blatz, Dorothy Millichamp, and Margaret Fletcher	180
SEVEN PSYCHOLOGIES, by Edna Heidbreder	181
ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUTH, by Elizabeth R. Pendry and Hugh Hartshorne	181
A MARRIAGE MANUAL, by Hannah Stone and Abraham Stone	181
A STORY OF A CHILD STUDY GROUP, by Jean Schick Grossman	188
FEAR AND THE PSYCHOLOGISTS, several books reviewed by Helen G. Sternau	213

CHILDREN'S READING

CITY EYES--CHILDREN'S READING	22
BOOKS OF THE YEAR FOR CHILDREN	87
BOOKS FOR CHILDREN--THE BIBLE IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS	154
BOOKS FOR CHILDREN--HUMOR AND NONSENSE	182
MAGAZINES FOR CHILDREN	220
CHILDHOOD IN LITERATURE	249
NEW NATURE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN	253
BOOKS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS 1935-36	250

This index does not include the regular departments such as Parents' Questions, News and Notes, In the Magazines, and Science Contributes which appear in each issue of CHILD STUDY. Contents of previous issues are indexed in "The Education Index."

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The Editors' Page



THE SMALL modern family intensifies most of the problems inherent in the relationship between brothers and sisters. But by making these emotional problems so obvious and inescapable, by centering the attention of parents upon them, it also brings us nearer to the right solutions. The story of Cain and Abel was written a long time ago; but the normal jealousy that exists between the younger and older child has only recently been studied as a matter of universal interest and importance to parents in their task of child rearing.

IT IS NOT only a question of competition between an older and a younger child—with the problems of the only child coming in for special consideration—but it is often a question of conflicting temperaments. So wide is the range of inheritable traits that a family sometimes seems a highly diverse and heterogeneous group which, except for the family bond, would burst asunder. Indeed, growing up is, or may be, such a scattering apart of its members to those diverse corners of the social structure where their ripened individualities can find happiest fulfilment.

A PART of the parental task is to afford encouragement to young and distinctive personality. Yet our personalities are not entirely hereditary; and however much they may be enriched by the larger world, they are first molded in the crucible of the family. Sometimes the brother or sister relationship may be a happy accident, far better than our logical deservings. But what may seem an unhappy accident—a relationship full of pain, humiliation, or anxiety—may actually help us to fulfill our own destinies. It is in adjusting to the family situation, whatever it may be, that our characters are first formed.

IN A SENSE, a family is a complex human fact over which no one of its integral units has control. But parents have that degree of control afforded by knowledge and tact. They cannot prevent family problems. But they can, learning by experience and interpreting experience by the light of science, help to bring these family problems to the happiest possible issue.

Floyd Dell

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ONE DOLLAR THE YEAR

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

CONTENTS

The Editors' Page - - - - -	1
FLOYD DELL	
Variations on the Family Theme - - - - -	3
RUTH WENDELL WASHBURN	
Share and Share Alike - - - - -	5
JOSETTE FRANK	
Special Capacities and Special Needs - - - - -	9
SIMON H. TULCHIN	
"Brothers and Sisters Have I None" - - - - -	11
ANNA W. M. WOLF AND RUTH BRICKNER, M.D.	
Parents' Questions and Discussion - - - - -	15
Science Contributes—Some Recent Studies of Family Inheritance - - - - -	18
Book Reviews - - - - -	20
City Eyes—Children's Books - - - - -	22
In the Magazines - - - - -	24
News and Notes - - - - -	25

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